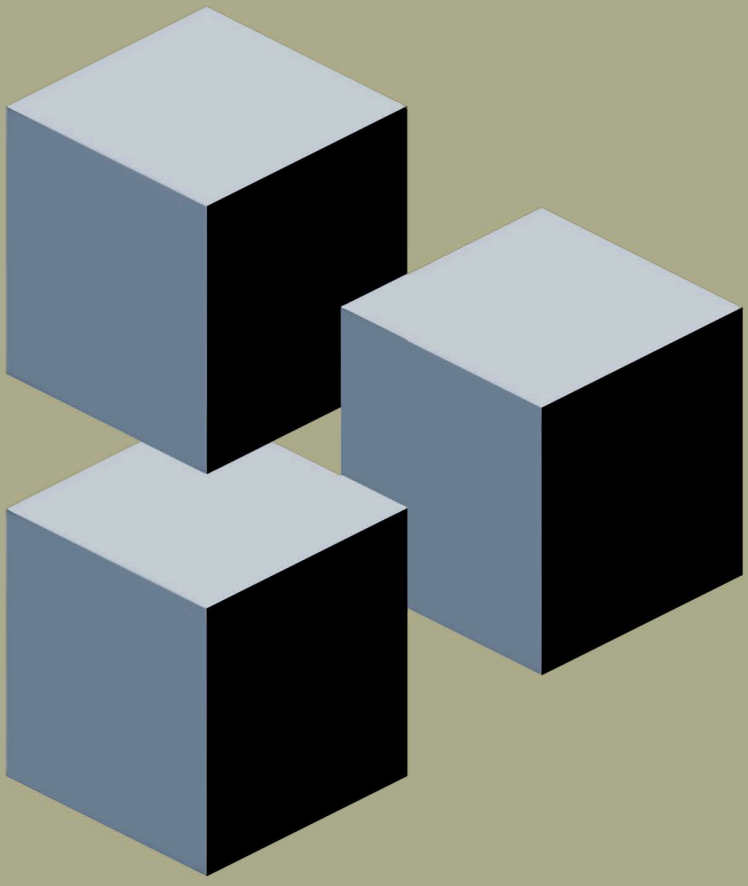
Nature and State



Martin Heidegger

Nature and State

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PART ONE

ON THE ESSENCE AND CONCEPT OF NATURE, HISTORY, AND STATE

SEMINAR, WINTER SEMESTER 1933–4

[53]

SESSION 1[1]

November 3, 1933

I. Our seminar director began by drawing our attention to the two sides of the question that we will consider: the theme of the seminar is the *essence and concept* of nature, history, and state.

He explained the relation between the two questions—the question of the essence of a thing or domain, and the question of its concept—as follows:

1 the two questions should not be confused, and

2 we must get acquainted with the essence of the domain in question before we think about its concept.

For it is not absolutely necessary to grasp the essence of a domain such as nature in a concept, and it may even turn out to be impossible in the end.

This simple reminder of the difference between the question of the essence of a domain and the task of grasping it conceptually—a task that should be taken up only later—was explained no further. As the session went on, this reminder proved too weak to force our discussion in the direction of the question of essence and keep it there. So for most of the first session of the seminar, an older natural scientist and an older student of philosophy began with number two—the concept—after all. These two older gentlemen first had to be drawn in, so to speak, to the primary question that faced us, and brought back to it. But the available time was too short to really lead the two "advanced" minds back to the simple, prescientific beginning of the question of the essence of the domains at hand, which consists in the plain, uncomplicated, quite naive expression of how nature, history, [54] and state are given to us; there was not enough time for the two gentlemen not only to be convinced that it was fair for them to be stopped and turned back in their thinking, but also to take active steps in the other direction. So that the first session would not end in confusion, Professor Heidegger himself then had to give us a simple presentation of two basic differences in the way nature is given to us (the difference between the material and the formal concept of nature—see below). This may have surprised some participants who no longer clearly remembered the course of the seminar from its beginning.

This was *how the seminar as such took place*. As it seems to the author of this protocol, our director could not have been very happy about this development, since the watchword he had set for our questioning was not taken up and followed at all, or only very poorly. The two main speakers could not have been satisfied, since at the end they may well have had the feeling that the seminar had passed over them, and that something had been coerced from them that they could not understand so quickly and whose implications they could not anticipate. And above all, the real and proper "beginners" among the seminar participants, and all who prefer a slow, considered, and truly step-by-step approach to the question, must have been very unsatisfied, if not completely confused.

Now, on this point one must make an observation that is obvious in an experienced and cooperative philosophical circle, where everyone has the sure feeling that he can rely on the others and can really speak openly

without any worries—but here, in a freshly convened beginners' seminar, the point may need to be made explicitly. Obviously, negative judgments such as the ones the author of this protocol has had to make about the far too rash and hasty speculations of the two main speakers are meant neither "morally" nor pedantically. For surely there were more students in the room who had just the same attitude as these two gentlemen and would have said the same thing—if they had been able to speak so readily. So in this regard, the way our first session went was simply typical, and the obstinacy of the two gentlemen was fully in order. Nevertheless, I would again like to point out and emphasize the strangeness of the situation: it was the director of this philosophical seminar, who was a professor of philosophy, for whom the two gentlemen were speaking too "philosophically," too "theoretically," too deeply, too exaltedly, and not naively and naturally enough—and it was the students who began with the second part, whereas usually this would have been the right and customary thing to do, and many may well have expected it from a seminar in philosophy.

[55] II. But this course of our first session, which has been sketched in its general character, took place on the basis of a particular question, and we now have to specify and draw out this point more precisely.

After the reminder and warning, reported above, about the difference between the question of essence and the "later" task of grasping a concept, which presupposes that the question of essence has been carried through, the director took up the second part of the announced theme of the seminar and drew our attention to the triad of nature, history, and state, what they are for us, and whether the sequence in which they are listed is arbitrary.

1 On the first question: the expression with which a participant tried to sum up all three, "life domain," was rejected as a term, and it was stipulated that in the context of the seminar, in order to avoid confusions, we should restrict the word "life" to the Being of plants and animals, and reserve the word "Dasein"[2] for human Being. We must say, then, that nature, history, and state belong in the domain of our Dasein, and that they are essentially fields (the only ones? the most important ones?) in which our Dasein plays itself out and maintains itself.

2 The result of the short, preliminary discussion of the sequence in which they are listed was that the order must not be arbitrary. Instead,

> the three fields have been ordered consciously and intentionally so that each successive one is narrower: history and state are incorporated in nature, and the state in turn belongs within history—it is a historical actuality. Here, as an aside, Professor Heidegger also asked the opposite question: whether every historical actuality involves a state just as much as the state belongs to history or is historical.

As brief as this first stage of the interpretation was, our reflections on nature, history, and state, understood together in their essence, got underway in an easy and relaxed manner. When Professor Heidegger finished this stage with the remark that we "now" had a certain idea of each of the three fields, this seemed to me to indicate that we should now turn to one of the three fields in particular, in the same calmly focused spirit and with a view to the two topics of inquiry that we had established in the first phase: (1) the question of nature's relation to our Dasein, what nature has to do with our human Dasein, and (2) the problem of sequence, that is, the question of how nature is connected to the other two domains, history and state, so that at the end of the seminar we could turn back to the unified essence that encompasses all three fields.

But instead of the cheerful progress that we were expecting along the indicated path, we suddenly got stuck in our discussions. A certain artificiality and affectation came over the speakers, while a certain lack of restraint and individualistic self-indulgence came over some others, [56] and everything that was brought up by the different sides from then on no longer fit together properly, but ran off in different directions. The seminar director reacted primarily in two ways: first, he tried using humor to bring certain speakers who had fallen into such linguistic artificiality and narrowness back to reason, so to speak; secondly, he took the other group, which was speculating all too freely, blithely and loosely and starting to ramble, and, by interrogating them sharply, forced them to take a stand and formulate things more precisely. They will all still remember vividly, for example, how the professor forced the gentleman who wanted to insist that everything was interior to him to accept even the lectern into his interior; but then the gentleman did not take the bait and admitted that he had the lectern *before* him, not within him (if he was not to falsify the sense of his representation of the lectern). Nevertheless, our discussion kept wavering

up to the end of the session and did not get over the disturbance that has left our discussion at the point where we now stand.

In a philosophical conversation there are no accidents, and there should be none. This is why the main question for the author of this protocol was how this blockage, artificiality, and affectation could suddenly have arisen, after the discussion had started off in such a flexible way.

To begin with, *in what did the disturbance consist?* In the rise and domination of a certain principled reflectiveness, or maybe it would be better to call it a reflective adherence to principle, which, once it had had its say, got mixed into nearly all the assertions and brought a hasty impatience into the speaking and thinking of the participants in the seminar—or it brought conflict into our thought and speech by destroying the innocence and naiveté of the plain, "simple" expression of what is given to us and how it is given. Above all, in our reflections it hindered thought itself—the process of slowly pacing off and pacing around the domain in question and then exploring it carefully, step by step.

Now, this reflective adherence to principle was not somehow generated within the seminar itself or awakened by it; it was already there, and it simply took control when it got the first opportunity to have a word. *But how could this happen?* If I may express my personal view, the door through which it burst into our discussion was the seminar director's instructions for questioning, which were somewhat too indefinite in their formulation and left too many possibilities open. After he briefly presented nature, history, and state in their unitary meaning for human Dasein and indicated the problem of how the three fields are to be ordered, he asked what we should do next; this was probably just meant to rouse us, so to speak, so that we might make a new, greater effort and proceed along the path we had begun, in the same way—but not that we should put the path itself into question "in principle." But he posed the question in such a strong tone that [57] the author of this protocol himself was startled for a moment and had the feeling that now something quite new would follow, namely, that we should first reflect on *how* we were to proceed in principle in our philosophizing.

The seminar director's later question about how nature is given could also be taken wrongly in this sense, and in fact it was: it was *not* understood as a challenge to take up a concrete and actual reflection on the essence of nature, starting with one of the factually accepted attitudes and relations to

nature, but instead it was misunderstood as bringing up the epistemological problem of the givenness *of such a thing* as nature, history, or state.

The first to reply to the seminar leader's question of what we should do next was the natural scientist, and the second was the gentleman with the interiority that generated everything and had everything inside it.

Both gentlemen began with number two (if we distinguish between essence and concept), that is, they took as their point of departure certain preexisting and preconceived concepts and theories. The other possible way in which one could have begun with number two, namely by starting right away to construct the concepts, was not proposed or even considered by any participant in the seminar.

The natural scientist began with the concept of nature as an exact lawfulness, and then immediately emphasized without further argument that the three domains of nature, history, and state "must" have a common *principle*. He imagined that the philosophical seminar should proceed in such a way that its only goal was to exhibit the common laws that, so to speak, ran through all three domains.

It was conceded to him that one can find and produce a connection between the question of the essence of nature and the exhibition of laws in the natural sciences. But this is a very difficult undertaking. And in no case is it a matter of merely coming up with some imprecisely conceived, indefinite, preexisting, and preconceived scientific concepts, and then without testing them, carrying them over to the domains of history and the state—and in this way leaping over the fundamental fact that nature, history, and state are *given to us as fields of Dasein*.

Then, using a concrete object available in the classroom (the chalk), we briefly explored how difficult it is to find the exact character of the givenness of even such a small and inconspicuous thing as a piece of chalk and to come really close to it in language.—Regarding our question of the essence of nature, history, and state, the seminar director also brought our attention especially to the fact that, in this little example of the chalk, we could already see how things stand with nature, history, and state in general. It is not just humanity that is related to nature, history, and state; even the simple chalk stands in relation to them.

[58] But now it must be said, regarding this interlude in the seminar, that the participants were not aware of it as such. No one, as it seems to the author of this protocol, caught onto it and was in a position—after the

course of the seminar to this point, and particularly after the reflective adherence to principle had been expressed so strongly—to pay attention to the very concrete How of a thing such as a piece of chalk in the way that was desired (although we were not directly challenged and instructed to do this).

The effect of this conflict was then that all the formulations that had been introduced were taken too far and, although they did not lose their grip on what stood nearby and was at hand, as it were, they became forced and artificial. After what had happened, we were all making a more or less conscious effort to turn our formulations and even our simple statements in the direction of the universal and first principles, which was precisely what we were supposed to set aside.

So, after two attempts at dialogue had failed to break through to the simple question of essence and to the necessary reflection this question first requires on what is given to us and how, the seminar director erased everything that had been said so far, so to speak, and set out once again from the beginning. He alerted us again to the question of essence and to the fact we had ascertained that nature is given to us; then he asked clearly and unambiguously *how* nature is given to us.

The question had hardly been asked, and there was no chance for anyone to proceed from the question to reflection, before—one must say—the second main speaker let fly with his theory to which, as he said, he had resigned himself after extensive thought, his theory of the interiority that generates everything and has everything inside it (nature and the lectern).

He was finally forced to concede that before all “philosophizing,” he had to ascertain the actual state of affairs, what is given and how, and that he must hold on to this state of affairs quite independently of epistemology if he wished to approach the essence of a thing and say something correct and significant about it. — This was without doubt the strongest point in the session, and there could be no doubt anymore about what the seminar director wanted.

Now, then, the discussion slowly went in the right direction, and a whole series of important points about actual natural givens, their ways of givenness, and ways in which we relate to nature were introduced. But, as I have said, the time was too short to develop them all properly and fully, to collect them, and to gather them together into their decisive, fundamental possibilities.

So in conclusion, the seminar director offered his own clarification, which pointed to the difference between the material and formal concepts of nature.

[59] The material concept of nature takes nature, logically speaking, as the sum total of all the things that have the characteristics of natural things; that is, it takes nature as a whole, *as a domain.*

The formal concept of nature, in contrast, aims at the Being of things that belong to the domain of nature, and more precisely at what their kind of Being highlights as nature. — If we bring this difference back to our initial distinction between essence and concept, it means that I can conceive of the whole as nature only if I already have a formal concept of nature, a deeper knowledge of nature's kind of Being. The distinction between domain and kind of Being should also apply to history and the state, and we should pay attention to it there.

SESSION 2[1]

November 17, 1933

We closed our first session with the distinction between the formal and material concepts of nature. We did not want to run the risk of *talking* about such a split and division of nature without clearly knowing the meaning of this word. It is not a coinage of the moment, but stands at the end of a historical sequence.

So what does *natura* mean? "Getting born." Birth occurs in the realm of living things; getting born indicates a relation to what is alive. But what about heaven and earth, mountain and valley, which are nature for us just as plants and animals are? What made the word *natura* capable of undergoing such an extension of its reference that today we can encompass as nature not only what gets born, but what does *not* get born?

The Latin word gives us no solution. It is not the beginning of the Western conception of nature. Before it there stands the Greek word *physis*, growth. What does that mean? Does it get us any further?

Both the Latin "getting born" and the Greek "growth" indicate a *process.* What is going on when something grows? A *development*, we think, since something is getting bigger. But how so? Getting bigger is not the essence of development. Maybe something is *altering* in growth. How does alteration happen? When the light goes out in the classroom, has it altered? No, a *change* has taken place. So what is *that*? Does the chalk lit by the light change if, losing its whiteness, it turns blue? No, it is altered, because its color has become—*other.*

We have not yet experienced whether, in growth, there is alteration or change, development or becoming other. But the processes that we [60] believe we see in growth are ultimately *motions.* So growth, too, is ultimately a motion. This cannot be some *arbitrary* motion. There must be

something *special* that distinguishes the motion of *physis*. For the concept of "growth" has undergone that *extension* whose origin we are seeking. What is special about the motion of growth that lets us include the "*non*-living," such as storm and clouds, in the sphere of nature?

In order to find what is distinctive about this motion, we will consider its *opposite* so that it can come into relief. What is it that, as such, opposes the motion of growth? Is it death, since death is rest and not the movement of the living? What is *rest*? The condition of being unmoved is not rest; a triangle is unmoved, but does it *rest*? Only what can be moved can rest. Rest is a limit case of motion, and death perhaps a limit case of life. Movement is exhausted in rest, and rest gives birth to motion.

In this way we *cannot* find what is distinctive about the movement in growth. We distance ourselves from it in a conceptual construct, and the essence of growth slips away from us. How do we *stand*, then, in front of something that is growing? How does the tenderness of a blossom originally touch us? How does the flower by the fence affect us? We say that it has "grown naturally," whereas the wire fence is "man*made*." What is the flower's having grown naturally? It too is something made, but something *that created itself*. Being-from-itself; coming-forth-from-itself; being-moved-by-itself; this by-itself is the essence of growth. The Greek *physis* is what, without human intervention, coming from itself, streams around human beings, gives them rest or unrest, calms or threatens them.

Now we know the origin of the conceptual extension. For *physis* is everything that creates itself. The blowing winds come from themselves, and so does the roaring sea. Man too comes from himself, as do his works and his history. For the *inception* of Greek philosophy does not distinguish between "nature" and non-natural "growth." It sees all beings creating themselves; for it, the *whole of Being* presents itself as By-Itself. This is why *physis* is the totality of Being for the first Greek philosophers, whom Aristotle calls the *physiologoi*: those who seek the *logos* of *physis* as the whole of Being. We should not call them "nature philosophers"; they do not distinguish between what we call "nature," "history," and so forth.

Now, what about the "nature" that we divide conceptually into the material and the formal? How is it that we managed to determine the material domain of things that have a natural character?—We must know about a thing's *kind of Being*, that is, the sort of way in which it is, if we want to assign it to some domain. The material concept thus *presupposes*

the formal; it encompasses what satisfies the formal concept. How does nature relate to these two concepts?

The formal and material concepts of nature are *grasped as one* through [61] *physis—natura*—nature, which is what creates itself. Nothing can produce itself without being a something; nothing grows that is not a thing. Nature tells us something both about what its things are and about how they are. The miracle of language harbors such a doubling that comes together as one.

Now if we ask about the "nature" of a human being, we want to get behind the "nature" of a thing, and we mean the "essence." What does that mean? What does it mean that "nature" has yet a *third* sense when we seek *what a thing is—to ti esti*? If *physis—natura*—nature grasps as one:

> the *what-Being* of a being, as
> something that belongs to a domain, and
> the *Being-such* of a being,
> then it says what a being is: *to ti esti*, the what-Being of a being as a whole.

If we follow the historical development of *physis* as the whole of Being, we will notice its *restriction* as a concept. *Physis* finds its counterpart in *thesis*—what is posited, positing, *making* in accordance with positive law. "Nature" is opposed to what is made, or "art"; nature now signifies only what produces *itself*. As such, it is revealed most strikingly where it creates itself in the realm of the "living." But the interpretation of nature's characteristics has shifted to the "nonliving": Today, atomic physics believes it can yield knowledge of the miracle of living Being.

After considering nature, we will try to grasp history in a similar way.

What does "history" mean? The past, we think, what *has* happened. But is history only the past? No. *History is everything that happens at all:* history is what happened, but also what is happening and will happen.

The triad of what happened, what is happening, and what will happen is encompassed by the *material* concept of history. It means the realm of all things that have the characteristic of happening. But thanks to the unifying doubleness of language, "history" also contains this *formal* concept: happening as such, which expresses the *Being-such* of a being. What is the formal happening as such related to? *Which* being is determined by it in its

kind? Only currently happening activity? Is history only what *is happening?* No, because what has happened and what will happen in the future are a "happening" to the same degree. So the formal concept of history grasps the three realms of the material *as one*, relating itself equally to each. But "history" means happening in its totality, in general. The happening of what has happened "is" no less than the happening of what is happening now and of future happening. Historians for whom history is not such a *totality of happening* must fail.

[62] This consideration of history brings us to a concept of Being that is essentially distinct from that of nature. We must sketch the difference between the two.

SESSION 3[1]

First we supplemented what we had said about *physis*. How could it be possible that *physis*, for the Greeks, meant beings as a whole—*physis*, which in our language means what grows, what comes from itself? Why does the word originally mean *what is*, for the Greeks?

In order to answer this question we must clarify what the Greek *einai* and *on* mean. They always mean a Being-present, Being-in-the-light-of-day, *pareinai*. What is absent has no Being, it is concealed. But *kryptesthai*, being concealed, is the concept that the Greeks oppose not only to Being or *ousia*, but also to *physis*; for *physis*, as what grows and emerges, is at the same time what comes to light, what offers itself. Here we can clearly see the common meaning of *physis* and *ousia*. It consists of growing, coming up, taking form. What is, is what is unconcealed. Heraclitus speaks of this connection between *physis* and unconcealment when he says *hē physis kryptesthai philei*, that is, beings endeavor to conceal themselves, or more clearly: not to be there. Thus, for the Greeks, growth, Being, and Being-unconcealed are bound together in a unity. With this knowledge we have gained something essential for the understanding of Greek Being.

Now let us briefly review the course of our questioning, so that we can stay aware of the point where we stand in our consideration of the essence and concept of nature, history, and state. We had first established that nature, history, and state are in some way domains of our Dasein, and that they are connected somehow. In order to know this connection, we must first try to get clear on what nature, history, and state are. We grasped nature on the basis of *physis* as what produces itself by itself, and here we showed the two ways the word *physis* can be interpreted—formally and materially. Then we explained history as happening—in present, past, and future—and we also clarified the material and formal concepts of history.

[63] This is where our investigation began last time. According to the usual way of speaking, history means something past: one says, “That belongs to history.” History can also mean something that comes from somewhere and has developed, as when we say, “Something has a long history.” When we assert that history includes not only what has happened, and not only (as contemporary history) what is happening now, but also what will happen in the future, we have expanded the usual concept of history in a certain respect, namely, with regard to time. We can grasp the essence of history only on the basis of time, but we completely ignored time when we were determining the essence of nature. Do we have a right to such a procedure?

Does not time have something to do with nature, then? After all, a plant that develops between spring and fall needs time to do so. The *times* of the year, the seasons, are important for natural life, and we also speak of an incubation *time* or period. All growth occurs in time. How is it then, that we can leave time out of the picture when we determine the essence of nature? Let us look more closely at the role that time plays in nature.

The modern conception of nature is determined by men such as Galileo who believed that they could come closer to what nature is by using mathematical methods. We call this the mathematization of the concept of nature—when one thinks that mathematical laws provide access to the understanding of nature. Natural processes are simply explained mechanically as changes of position of a particular material element in time. In this way, they can be calculated. But with the calculation of a process, do we really get an understanding of its essence, or of the essence of nature? Motion is a change of place in time. Changing place means traversing a path. What is a path? A path is not just any arbitrary distance, but one that actually is or should be measured. This requires time. Time must, therefore, be included in the definition of a path, and in fact it has a particular function: with the help of time, the path is divided. The definition of the path is $d = vt$, distance = velocity × time. That is how simply time in nature is conceived mathematically. The path is taken only as an example; every fundamental definition of nature includes time—time conceived in this manner. One considers natural processes only as something mathematical, and fails to see much of what constitutes the essence of natural process, or sees it inadequately.

From all this there follows—and this is important at the moment for our investigation—that all natural processes are somehow in time and linked to time. How? The mechanical conception of nature does not clarify this issue in a way that satisfies our question. Instead, our question arises once again: if time is really everywhere in nature, in some way, then why is it not expressed in our definition of the essence of nature, as it is in our definition of the essence of history? Does not time have the function, [64] in nature as well as in history, that we calculate and count with it? So it must seem, after all, that we have been on the wrong path. No—it is just that, when we ask about the *essence* of nature and history, our way of posing the question must relate time, too, to this essence. Our question is now: how far does time determine every being as a being, in the realms of nature and history?

To answer this question, we must first solve two preliminary questions. How do we grasp time in natural and historical processes? And what is time? Within a certain time, I achieve a certain goal. Where is time there? I can measure it with a clock. But even if my clock is not running, time is still there. Is it a part of motion? Maybe it is true that it has something to do with motion, if we also include rest as a limit case of motion—but this is not what concerns us at the moment. Is it perhaps something that we think up, with whose help we can put processes in order? A measure, in other words? How about that—is time actually the measure? Do we not measure, instead, with the help of the sun?

Finally, one claims that "time is the duration of natural processes"—but that too, in the end, brings us back to time as measure. This does not get us any further with our question. We keep taking time as a mathematical quantity, as in physics, where one operates with time as something measurable and calculable.

Now someone answers the question of the essence of time by pointing out that time is a differential, that is, a limit value of the present. This opens new possibilities for knowledge. Time is only in the moment, so right away, time no longer is; and what will come is not yet. So time is constricted to the point of the present now-Being. Everything earlier and later is excluded. We must see that on this path, although we have come farther, we will not find what we are seeking. For in this way we cannot grasp and hold time, since it always no longer is anymore. In general, when we are asking about time, we cannot answer—as we do with other things, such as a tree, a house, and so forth—what it is, where it is, and how it is. Time is, in

principle, something completely different from the other things we ask about. On the one hand it is only the current now, but on the other hand, as we rightly believe we can assert, it comprises past, present, and future.

Now we have to take what we have discovered about time into our posing of the question. What evidence justifies us in grounding the historical as such through time in particular? We must bring this together with the other question: why is time of fundamental significance for the essence of history, quite otherwise than for the essence of nature?
[65]

SESSION 4[1]

January 13, 1934

In the last session we occupied ourselves with time. So that we could reveal over the course of our further sessions just how untenable it is to bifurcate the world into subjectivity and objectivity, and so that we could adopt the right fundamental orientation to time, we first examined the two most important theories of time, the Newtonian and the Kantian, both of which proceed on the basis of a partition of the world into the subjective and objective.

Newton, known along with Leibniz as the great inventor of differential calculus, conceived of time in the way his calculus required: as a temporal stream continuously flowing in one direction, in whose intervals all events in space can be unambiguously ordered. This Newtonian time was supposed to be an independent occurrence outside of our subjective understanding and therefore was supposed to become, like all other objects, the content of our experience. This concept of time is objective, in contrast to the Kantian one, which is known to us as the subjective concept of time.

For Kant, time is no longer a content of experience; rather, time is the form of sensory intuition. Time is form, because it is the subjective condition "by which alone intuitions can take place in us."[2] Time is a form of intuition and not of the understanding, because I can think of only a single time, never different times at once. But what one can represent only singly is an intuition. And furthermore, time is the form of inner intuition, because time is the manner in which the mind intuits itself. Time, as our intuition, is therefore characterized as the faculty by which the mind looks inwards and is distinguished from appearance in space, which is not oriented inwards and is therefore called external intuition. But should the fact that spatial intuition does not point inwards in the same sense as time

provide a reason to distinguish between inner and outer intuition? Least of all can we draw such a distinction merely because with the help of spatial intuition we go forth into space and understand the juxtaposition of things. If we were entirely cut off from the outer world, we would still have an experience of space, presumably: the feeling of having a body. Space, understood as an intuition, becomes one-sidedly geometrical and is therefore treated too one-sidedly. We must not ask: how must space be constituted so that it satisfies the axioms of geometry? Rather, we must ask: how is space constituted so that a science such as geometry is possible? A response to the philosophical question about space and time should not proceed according to the standpoint of science, and especially not according to mathematical physics [66], as has been attempted. A theory in physics, such as the theory of relativity, should not presume the right to refute or confirm a philosophical doctrine of space-time. So when, on the basis of purely physical relationships, time is treated as the fourth dimension of space, we can take this seriously as a mathematical theory, but not philosophically.

To come to grips with the essence of time, we have to free ourselves from every theoretical presupposition, place ourselves into the world, and ask ourselves how we relate to time.

We are familiar with expressions from everyday life that have to do with time, such as: we need time; we gain time; we lose time; and so on. From such manners of speaking, it is clear how seriously we take time: after all, the time that we have at our disposal is bounded by death. We therefore see ourselves as compelled to divide up our time in a precise way.

The necessity of dividing time leads us to the question of the reckoning of time. Our time is oriented to the sun. That we measure our time by the sun in particular is not a matter of necessity but rather depends upon an agreement. In order to carry out a division of the day into hours, minutes, and seconds, we have built ourselves our clocks. We coordinate particular positions of the sun with particular positions of the clock. The connection between sun and time is the We. We coordinate them because we have to deal with time. With this coordination, we make the tacit assumption that the sun obeys the same mechanical rules (acceleration, etc.) as the gears of our clock, for if this were not the case, then any coordination would be absurd.

But let us look away from the reckoning of time and turn to the question of how it stands with time itself. Where is time when we look at a clock and say it is such-and-such o'clock? When we say, "It is seven o'clock," why is there something more to this than the naming of a number? For not just any statement can say this, but we are saying it in this particular way, and we emphasize the "now" that appears in the sentence, "Now it is seven o'clock." In the Now time gets its meaning for us. This is why the Now has precedence over the After and the Before, and from the perspective of the Now, Before and After even appear to be nothing. For only the Now really is; the Before is no longer and the After is not yet. We cannot hold on to the Now, because in every moment another Now is the Now. The Now thus seems to have fundamental significance for calculus as the limit transition or infinitesimal that dissolves the contradiction that lies in the essence of the continuum. For one has to view the ordered Nows as a continuum, that is, as a region in which no one point is exceptional. But we have just seen that one now, *the* now, is in fact exceptional. Only through the limit function inherent to the differential calculus does this contradiction get resolved. Through the infinitesimal, one Now becomes distinguished and every other Now becomes subordinated to it.

This Now is there and does not necessarily need to be oriented to another occurrence. But since no occurrence is a Now, every Now can be oriented to something else. Our time is specified by the date. Time must be datable. This means that it must be possible for something to be given to which our now may be oriented.

The Now requires the We. For it is we who say, "Now it is seven o'clock." The Now obliges us to decide both forwards and backwards. The animal does not stand under this obligation to decide, because otherwise it would have to be able to order things, as we know from the lecture course.[3] The animal therefore has no time.

Because of this, we already see that the Kantian–Newtonian concept of time must lead into error and is a violent abstraction. In the subsequent sessions we plan to examine how this concept is inadequate for the time of nature and history.

[67]

SESSION 5[1]

January 12, 1934

At the beginning of the session, we returned to the Kantian understanding of time in order to expand on what we had said on this topic.

We had said that time, for Kant, was the form of inner intuition, that is, intuition directed inwards.— But what does "form" mean?

The essential character of form is grasped as "determination." Form thus determines the content, or what can be determined; time as form determines the experiential contents of inner intuition.

Now, how do we determine intuition? The protocol said that intuition was something singular, in contrast to a concept. This did not satisfy us.

We realized that intuition and concept have something in common: both are modes of representation. — Nevertheless, in intuition I represent a singular This, while in a concept I represent something that applies to many things, something that is nonintuitive and universal. Intuition is further characterized by the fact that in it I sense or perceive, while in a concept I think and construct creatively and spontaneously.

For the Kantian way of discussing time, this means that every individual thing given to me in my mental processes is determined by time. I perceive the processes of my thinking, feeling, and speaking only in the succession of time.

In contrast, space as the form of outer intuition means that everything external presents itself to me in the spatial order of the next to each other, behind, and in front.

[68] But now, how are we to understand that for Newton, time appears as a determining factor in *space*?

We do not grasp occurrences in space as such; rather, *we* grasp them. The cognitions of physics, as cognitions, as psychological processes in our

consciousness, stand within the form of time, and thus so do the contents that are thought in them. This answer of Kant's is an artificial theory—so it was said—and is contradicted by the fact that we immediately sense temporal succession and do not first get it through reflection.

After these supplemental thoughts on time in Kant, we reconstructed the context in which we are asking about time, so that we might be completely clear about how we are proceeding.

To begin with, we were speaking about nature, but then we distinguished history from it because we essentially understand history on the basis of time. On the basis of some suggestions, we understood history, naturally enough, as the past, but then we moved beyond these preliminary stages. In any case, time immediately played an essential role in our discussion of history, whereas we had neglected it in nature, even though the "t" does not play an unessential role in nature either.

Why do we speak in this way about nature and history? This question drove us to further questions about time.

In asking about time, we began with particular theories in order then to understand time in contrast to them, apart from every theory. We then determined that we grasp time in the "here and now" and that the presupposition for this is that we have something like time in the first place.

But if we say "now," and try to comprehend this "now," we experience that it has always already disappeared. What has happened to the "now," where has it gone? It is gone as the "now" and yet it is still there, as a past "now." I still have it. As it slips away, what character does this disappearing "now" have on its way? Is it a "then, when," a "previously"?—Only insofar as I am already reflecting on this. Neither is it something general such as "not-now." It is a "just happened." The singular "now" is now always already a "just happened," and as having such a structure, it has a relationship that reaches into the present, although it is flowing away into the past. Likewise, every "now" has a relation to the next "now": the "*about to happen*." Thus—it was said—there is basically no "now" anymore, no present; instead, we stand between "just happened" and "about to happen," in a double relation to future and past.

Now, how is it possible for me to stand in this temporal horizon? How is it possible that "just happened" and "about to happen," as horizon, give me the immediate knowledge of the "now"?

What makes it possible for me to grasp the vanishing "now" as what just happened? An experience?—A representation?

No, a *retention.* I retain the "now" in its change because I go along with it into the "just happened," I live in the "just happened." This past that does not slip away is what makes it possible for me to remember.

[69] In turn, the relation to the "about to happen" is *expectation.* Thus, human beings stand in their distinctive way of waiting and retaining that makes it possible for them to reflect, to free themselves from being delivered over in an eternal "now" to what faces them in each case. Insofar as we are presencing in expecting and retaining, we can speak of a "now," a "just happened," an "about to happen," an "at that time," a "right away," and a succession of time.

We refer to this fundamental constitution of human beings as authentic time. As human temporality, it is the condition for the time of which we commonly speak.

So there are two things that we understand as "time":

First there is the time with which we are used to reckoning, that time between 5 and 7 o'clock, *the* time in which the processes of nature and history occur. But then there is a temporality in which man himself is.

This is why in our consideration of history we "quite spontaneously" introduced time. This does not mean the time that the historian can use to determine (and test) that in AD 800, Charlemagne was crowned emperor. No, we are talking about history as *our* past, as what was the fate of our ancestors and thus is our own. We do not understand time as a framework, but as the authentic fundamental constitution of human beings. And only an entity whose Being is time can have and make history. An animal has no history.

With this understanding, we emerged from our perspective so far, in which we were taking nature and history as equally objective processes. Instead, history is now the distinctive "term" for human Being.

Now, we have to say regarding this reflection that it was spoken from our own historical Dasein in this moment and thus must be subject to a certain intelligibility, like all statements and truths about human beings, which always have to be attained in one's own decision. We must keep this in mind as we now ask about the nature of the state.

The state

We had begun by saying that the domains of nature, history, and state are progressively narrower—that history is embedded in nature, and the state as a historical phenomenon is embedded in history. Now we want to see whether this characterization is in fact correct; for now, we simply asked whether there is any history without a state.

If we now ask about the state, we are asking about ourselves.

[70] Now, how can we tackle this issue with our questioning, in order to display the essence of the state?

One can ask about the purpose of the state. This approach assumes that the state is a human institution and that there was a condition of man before a state, a condition that forced him to found a state. It was remarked that this sort of question is asked at a particular time, in a state in some particular condition. This was meant to help us see how important it is to get clear on where we have to stand.

At bottom, the question of the purpose of the state is also the question of its origin, and it is in this form that the question of its essence usually appears. But the question of origin is not at all an original questioning about the state, for I can construct a theory of the beginnings of the state or interpret available sources informing me about its beginnings only if I know what a state is. But behind this knowledge there already stands yet another very particular decision.

State—what does this "term" express?

As we did when we considered nature, we can take the state (1) materially: just as substances and living things belong in the realm of nature, citizens, officials, tax offices and the like belong in the realm of the state. (2) We can take the state formally: then we ask how, in what way, something is. We then understand by "state" a way of Being in which humans are.—It is in this way, then, that we primarily want to grasp the essence of the state, and not as an area of history.

Now, which being belongs to this state?—"The people" [*das Volk*]. We must then ask what we understand by "people," for in the French Revolution they gave the same answer: the people.

This answer is possible only on the basis of a decision for a state. The definition of the people depends on how it is in its state.

To begin with, we established formally that the people is the being that *is* in the manner of a state, the being that is or can be a state. We then asked the further formal question: what character and form does the people give itself in the state, and what character and form does the state give to the people?

The form of an organism? Impossible, because when we ask about the state we are asking about the essence of man, and not about the essence of an organism.

The form of order? That is too general, since I can order everything—stones, books, and so on. But what hits the mark is an order in the sense of mastery, rank, leadership, and following. This leaves open the question of who is master. In Aristotle and Plato, the question of the essence of the state begins with the question: who rules, who is permitted to rule?

But we should strive to gain a genuine knowledge of the state, so that the state may form our essence and thus come to power.
[71]

SESSION 6[1]

January 19, 1934

At the beginning we noted in regards to our conception of *temporality* that we see the future as the fundamental characteristic of time and that for us the future is connected directly with the past. We persist from the past into the future, and only in this way do we persist in the present. This conception is contrasted to the first presentation of the concept of time in Aristotle's physics, where the Now is considered the fundamental phenomenon of time, the present, while past and future are understood as no–longer–now or not–yet-now.

Then we turned to the concept of the *state* and clarified the meaning of the word: *status* means condition, it means a mode of Being, and so state, that is, *status rei publicae*, literally means the mode of Being of a people.

One customarily describes *politics* as every practical and theoretical occupation in the state and having to do with the state. Now, this word "politics" comes from the Greek *polis*, which means the state as *community*, which, in Greece, was the sole site where all the state's Being took place—it was where everything happened that we characterize as the state. If Aristotle then coined the well-known expression that the human being is a *zōon politikon*, that does not therefore mean that we must be communal beings—or, as the Romans translated it, an *animal sociale*—simply because we cannot survive alone or because, for better or worse, from our first day of life onwards we are naturally surrounded by other people. Rather, quite apart from such biological considerations, human beings are truly the *zōon politikon* because to be human means: in a community, to carry in oneself the possibility and the necessity of giving form to and fulfilling one's own Being and the Being of the community. Human beings are a *zōon politikon* because they have the strength and the capacity for the *polis*, and here the

polis is not conceived as something already subsisting in advance, but rather as something to which human beings can and must give form. But in this sense, the human being certainly "belongs to the polis" or is *politikos*—as the living being, that is, which has the possibility and the necessity of existing in the polis.

But state *and politics* in this genuine sense are related in such a way that a state is possible at all only on the grounds of the fact that the Being of human beings is political. And if it is widely believed that it is the reverse, that the state is the precondition for politics, then that is due to the ascendancy of a false and vulgar concept that there is nothing more to politics than the business of the state, according to which politics certainly depends on the existence of a state.

[72] But to proceed, the word *politics* was subjected to still further narrowing:[2] it was made into a circumscribed[3] domain, one among many others, such as private life, the economy, technology, science, religion. Politics was set next to all these others as one area within culture, as one said. And one even believed it possible to establish this philosophically by assigning the values of the true, the good, and the beautiful to each and every one of these cultural areas. And so the realm of the political became a markedly inferior one: it went so far that "political" could be equated with "slippery," and a politician meant someone who knew how to twist things with parliamentary tricks.[4]

The development began in the Renaissance, when the individual human being, as the person, was raised up as the goal of all Being—the great man as the two ideals: *homo universalis* and the specialist. It was this new will to the development of the personality that brought about the complete transformation according to which, from then on, everything was supposed to exist purely for the sake of the great individual. Everything, and therefore politics too, now gets shifted into a sphere within which the human being[5] is willing and able to live to the fullest. Thus politics, art, science and all the others degenerate into domains of the individual will to development, and this all the more as they were expanded through gigantic accomplishments and thus became specialized. In the times that followed, all the domains of culture were allowed to grow ever farther apart until they could not be kept in view as a whole,[6] up to our own day, where the danger of such behavior displayed itself with elemental clarity in the collapse of our state.

We therefore recognized it as an urgent task of our time to counter this danger in order to attempt to give back to *politics* its proper rank, to learn to see politics again as the fundamental characteristic of human beings who philosophize within history, and as the Being in which the *state* fully develops, so that the state can truly be called the way of Being of a people.

And with this we come to the entity that belongs to the state, its substance, its supporting ground: *the people* [*das Volk*]. Here too, we began with the question of what the word *Volk* means, and we found that with this word we shed light on the most diverse sides of what the people comprises. If, for example, we say "folk song," "folk customs," then we say the word *Volk* in a way that alludes to the life of sentiments and feelings; by this we mean a certain naive,[7] unspoiled, fresh originality of mores. This is different from turns of phrase such as "the crowd of people scattered": here we see an aggregation of subordinates, of the uneducated "rabble," which is supposed to be numerically superior and shut off from so-called "higher" goods; this way of speaking, then, emphasizes the social differentiation of the people.

By contrast, an expression such as "taking the census of the people" [*Volkszählung*] certainly means neither counting the "unspoiled" people as described above, nor something like the counting of a rabble; rather, it encompasses those who belong as citizens to a *single* state. So here we are selecting as the boundary and definition of the people [73] the characteristic of belonging to the state. But closely related to this is a term such as "public health" [*Volksgesundheit*], in which one also now feels the tie of the unity of blood and stock, the race. But in the most comprehensive sense, we use the term *Volk* when we speak of something like "the people in arms": with this we mean nothing merely like those who receive draft notices, and also something other than the mere sum[8] of the citizens of the state. We mean something even more strongly binding than race and a community of the same stock: namely, the nation, and that means a kind of Being that has grown under a common fate and taken distinctive shape within a *single* state.

SESSION 7[1]

February 2, 1934

The political as the fundamental possibility and distinctive way of Being of human beings is, as we said, the foundation on which the state has its Being. The Being of the state is anchored in the political Being of the human beings who, as a people, support this state—who decide for it. This political, that is, historically fateful decision requires us to clarify the original, essential connection between people and state. An understanding and knowledge of the essence of the state and people is needful for every human being. This knowledge, the concepts and cognition, belong to political education, that is, what leads us into our own political Being; but this does not mean that everyone who gains this knowledge can or may now act politically as a statesman or leader. For the origin of all state action and leadership does not lie in knowledge; it lies in Being. Every leader *is* a leader; he must be a leader in accordance with the marked form of his Being; and he understands, considers, and brings about[2] what people and state are, in the living development of his own essence.

A leader does not need to be educated politically—but a band of guardians in the people does, a band that helps to bear responsibility for the state. For every state and all knowledge about the state grows within a political tradition. Where this nourishing, securing soil is lacking, even the best idea for a state cannot take root, grow from the sustaining womb of the people, and develop. Otto the Great based his empire on the prince–bishops by obliging them to service and knowledge in political and military matters. And Frederick the Great educated the Prussian nobility into guardians of his state. Bismarck oversaw this process of rooting his idea of the state in the firm, strong soil of political nobility, and when his sustaining arm let go, the Second Reich collapsed without any support. We may not overlook the

founding of a political tradition [74] and the education of a political nobility. Every individual must now reflect in order to arrive at knowledge of the people and state and his own responsibility. The state depends on our alertness, our readiness, and our life. The manner of our Being marks the Being of our state. In this way, every people takes a position with regard to the state, and no people lacks the urge for the state. The people that turns down a state, that is stateless, has just not found the gathering of its essence yet; it still lacks the composure and force to be committed to its fate as a people.

This is why we have to be especially ready to try to clarify further the essence of people and state. We begin, again, by clarifying the political as a way of Being of human beings and what makes the state possible. There are other concepts of the political that oppose this approach, such as the concept of the friend-enemy relation that stems from Carl Schmitt. This concept of politics as the friend-enemy relation is grounded in the view that struggle, that is, the real possibility of war, is the presupposition of political behavior; that the possibility of the struggle for decision, which can also be fought out without military means, sharpens present oppositions—be they moral, religious, or economic—into radical unity as friend and enemy. The unity and totality of this opposition of friend and enemy is the basis for all political existence. But a decisive aspect of this view is that the political unit does not have to be identical with state and people.

Another conception of the political is expressed in Bismarck's saying, "Politics is the art of the possible." Possibility here does not mean an arbitrary possibility that can be dreamed up accidentally, but what is solely possible, the only thing possible. Politics, for Bismarck, is the ability to see this and to bring it about [?],[3] which must essentially and necessarily arise from a historical situation, and at the same time the *technē*, the skill, to make actual what one knows. With this, politics becomes the creative project of the great statesman who can survey the whole happening of history, and not just the present—who, in his idea of the state, sets a goal that he keeps firmly in view despite all accidental changes in the situation. This view of politics and the state is tied closely to the personal genius of the statesman upon whose essential vision, strength, and attitude the Being of the state depends; when his power and life stop, the state begins to lose its power.

Again we see that a state that is to endure and mature must be grounded in the Being of the people. The people, the being, has a very particular relation to its Being, the state. We now have to consider how these relations between people and state, and beings and Being, are essentially linked. We should follow two paths here: first we should draw a distinction between beings and Being in general, [75] and then we want to ask about the distinction between state and people, starting with our own state and people.

Is there a difference between Being and beings? If so, in what does it consist and how far can it be clarified? The distinction between Being and beings has often been explained by saying that beings are the content, or what can be determined, and Being is the form, which determines. This does not capture the essence. On the other hand, there seems to be a close connection between Being and beings. One does not seem thinkable—much less distinguishable—without the other. Being is the condition for beings, and beings in turn are the condition for Being. Here we cannot get a clear view. Maybe we are already asking wrongly when we ask about the difference. In any case, our failure must at least then show us why we cannot ask in this way, and how a genuine question would have to get started here. But for now, let us ask concretely: What is a being? What is Being?

The chalk is a present-at-hand being. We see it and assert something about it: the chalk is white. When we do so, we can detect the chalk and the whiteness of the chalk in experience, with our own eyes. But where is the "is," the form of the auxiliary verb "to be" that we constantly use in our assertions? We cannot see "is." What is the "is"? We use "is" in various senses. In the sentence "The chalk is white," the "is" expresses a quality, a property, a how-Being. The "is" means something else in the sentence "The chalk is present at hand," for presence at hand is not a property but rather a kind of Being, what-Being. But with this distinction we really have not yet clarified what the essence of the "is" and Being is. Being is in no way visible, we cannot have any image of it. And still, we constantly say "is" and understand right away, without any theory, this "is"—but we cannot say what we mean by it. As self-evident as this "is" seems to be, it becomes just as obscure, difficult, and puzzling when we ask about it. We cannot ask about Being with the question: what is Being? Are we supposed to recognize the "is" only if it "is *not*," that is, on the basis of the Nothing? If this were so, would not the whole world, we ourselves, and everything

become null? This is outrageous and confusing. Within the self-evident there suddenly opens an abyss, unsurveyable and dangerous, but unavoidable for whoever truly *questions*. Human beings, who in accordance with their essence have to question, must expose themselves to the danger of the Nothing, of nihilism, in order to grasp the meaning of their Being by overcoming nihilism.

We cannot explain the question of Being further here; we simply see that there is an essential difference between Being and beings, and that this difference is completely other than the difference between one being and another, such as the book and the chalk.

But we must still indicate the ambiguity that Being has: the chalk is; a dog is; a human is. In all three assertions we specify that [76] *something* is, something that is not nothing. But in each of these three situations, Being is something different: chalk as chalk is an object, while to be a dog is to be an animal, and thus, as living, to have a different kind of Being from present-at-hand objects. And Being-human is quite different and distinct in its way of Being. How so? What is it that distinguishes human Being?

We say that humans are conscious of their Being and of the Being of other beings; they have consciousness. This human consciousness is not only something knowable, which one can either know or not, but is a fundamental capacity of human Dasein. Human beings' own Being is an issue for them, and thanks to consciousness they can concern themselves with it. The height of human consciousness harbors in it the possibility of the deep fall into unconsciousness. In the constant powerlessness of unconsciousness and lack of conscience, man sinks beneath beast. The animal has no relation to Being; it cannot be unconscious, derelict, or indifferent. But when human beings lose their consciousness and conscience, they lose their most proper worth. Without consciousness, the knowing and caring about the height and depth, greatness, and powerlessness of their Being in the whole of the world, they are no longer human beings, and since they cannot be animals or plants or objects, at bottom they are nothing at all. With the loss of consciousness, human Being becomes null.

Just as human beings are conscious of their Being-human—they relate to it, they are concerned with it—in the same way, the people as a being has a knowing fundamental relation to its state. The people, the being, that actualizes the state in its Being, knows of the state, cares about it, and wills

it. Just as every human being wants to live, wills to *be here* as a human being, just as he keeps holding on to this and loves his Dasein [Being-here] in the world, the people wills the state as its way to be as a people. The people is ruled by the urge for the state, by *erōs* for the state. But inasmuch as *erōs* is something distinctly human, this will to a state cannot be conceived biologically, or even compared to the drive of bees and termites to their "state." For the life (*zōē*) of animals is fundamentally different from human life.

The people's love for the state, its wish and will for it, expresses itself as taking a position, rejection, dedication—in short, as concern for the essence and form of the state. So the form or constitution of the state is then also an essential expression of what the people takes to be the meaning of its own Being. The constitution is not a rational contract, a legal order, political logic, or anything else arbitrary and absolute; constitution and law are the actualization of our decision for the state—they are factical attestations of what we take to be our historical task as a people, the task that we are trying to live out. Accordingly, knowledge of the constitution and law is not just the province of so-called "politicians" and jurists, but as thinking and consciousness of the state, it belongs to the Dasein of every individual human being who takes upon himself the struggle and responsibility for his people. Our task at this [77] historical moment involves the clear development and transformation of thinking about the state. Each and every man and woman must learn to know, even if only in a vague and unclear way, that their individual life decides the fate of the people and state—either supports it or rejects it.

This knowledge also includes commitment to the order of the state. Order is the human way of Being, and thus also the way of Being of the people. The order of the state expresses itself in the delimited field of tasks of human individuals and groups. This order is not merely organic, as one could suppose and has supposed on the basis of the fable of Menenius Agrippa,[4] but is something spiritual and human, which also means something voluntary. It is based on the relations of human beings in ruling and serving each other. Like the medieval order of life, the order of the state today is sustained by the free, pure will to following and leadership, that is, to struggle and loyalty. For if we ask, "What is rule? What is it based on?" then if we give a true and essential answer, we experience no power, enslavement, oppression, or compulsion. Instead what we experience is that

rule and authority together with service and subordination are grounded in a common task. Only where the leader and the led bind themselves together to *one* fate and fight to actualize *one* idea does true order arise. Then spiritual superiority and freedom develop as a deep dedication of all forces to the people, the state, as the most rigorous breeding, as engagement, endurance, solitude, and love. Then the existence and superiority of the leader sinks into the Being, the soul of the people, and binds it in this way with originality and passion to the task. And if the people feels this dedication, it will let itself be led into struggle, and it will love struggle and will it. It will develop and persist in its forces, be faithful and sacrifice itself. In every new moment, the leader and the people will join more closely in order to bring about the essence of their state, that is, their Being; growing with each other, they will set their meaningful historical Being and will against the two threatening powers of death and the devil—that is, ruination and decline from their own essence.

SESSION 8[1]

February 16, 1934

Last time, before we got into our main topic, we still had to add some supplemental points to the session before last.

The Greeks had two words for what we call life: *bios* and *zōē*. They used *bios* in a twofold sense. First, in the sense of [78] biology, the science of life. Here we think of the organic growth of the body, glandular activity, sexual difference, and the like. For most of our scientists today, biology seems suspicious from the start, because beyond the experimental table and the microscope, it seeks a direct relation to life—and to human life in particular, our life, which to these scientists often seems less important as a research topic than the physiology of the frog. This is why we do not find any real biology, even in our universities. If we wanted to occupy ourselves with it anyway, we would need just one thing: we would have to make use of the relevant findings of zoology, botany, and physiology while staying open to biological ways of posing problems. Biology is the name for a natural science in the broadest and most universal sense.

Another sense of *bios* for the Greeks is the course of a life, the history of a life, more or less in the sense that the word "biography" still has for us today. *Bios* here means human history and existence—so there can be no *bios* of animals. *Bios*, as human *bios*, has the peculiar distinction of being able either to stand above the animal or to sink beneath it. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* ([Book I] Chapter 3, 1095b), three *bioi*, three fundamental forms of human existence, are distinguished: the *bios apolaustikos*, the life of enjoyment, whose standard for things is enjoyment, pleasure, *hēdonē*; the *bios politikos*, in which everything is decided on the basis of ambition, repute, and renown; and the *bios theōretikos*, the highest fundamental form of human existence, the life of one who authentically

contemplates—the philosopher. Of course, this does not refer to people like our scientists today.

In addition to *bios*, the Greek language also has the word *zōē*. To begin with, it is life as a purely physiological process; yet the meanings of *bios* and *zōē* are intermingled. In the New Testament, *zōē* means the life of blessedness, the life bound to God. But when the Greeks say that the human being is a *zōon logon echon*, they mean a living being (in the sense of zoology) that can speak.

We also had to add something about the inner reasons for the failure of Bismarck's politics. We heard that a people, in addition to needing a leader, also needs a tradition that is carried on by a political nobility. The Second Reich fell prey to an irreparable collapse after Bismarck's death, and not only because Bismarck failed to create this political nobility. He was also incapable of regarding the proletariat as a phenomenon that was justified in itself, and of leading it back into the state by reaching out to it with understanding. But the main reason is probably that the *Volk*-based character of the Second Reich was exhausted in what we call patriotism and fatherland. These elements of the union of 1870–1 are not [79] to be judged negatively in themselves, but they are completely inadequate for a truly *Volk*-based state. They also lacked an ultimate rootedness in the *Volk*, the people.

Before we got into our main topic, we briefly connected it to what came before. We saw that the question of the state cannot be posed in isolation, that the state cannot be projected by a political theorist, but that it is a way of Being and a kind of Being of the people. The people is the entity whose Being is the state. So we can consider things in two ways. The first point of view, which we have already considered, comes from above, in a certain sense—from the universal, from Being, and what is. Now, this universal point of view should not be confused with the attempts to deduce the state in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Rousseau, for instance, believed that the state was a *contrat social* that was based only on each individual's striving for his own welfare. This state would no longer be the state in the sense of the political as the fundamental character of Western man, who exists on the basis of philosophy; it would be a subordinate means to an end, in service to the development of the personality in the liberal sense, one domain among many.

The second possible point of view comes from below, in a certain sense, from the people and the state, from us ourselves. This procedure forces us to distinguish two paths we can take. We want to feel our way forwards first by considering the people in isolation, and then by considering the state in isolation. This distinction, of course, can only be methodological, since it is after all impossible to consider the people without a state—the entity without its Being, in a certain sense. The first question, the question of the people, which is the first topic that concerns us, must be directed in such a way that we will reach the state.

Now, we might put forward the following line of thought: since the state, as the Being of the people, is evidently historical, we could ask about the people and its historical character on this basis. But since at this point we have not yet decided whether or not every activity of the people has something to do with the state from the start, we want to take another tack in our work for now.

We already saw earlier that natural processes and the happening of history occur in space and time. Now we want to try to comprehend the people on this basis as well. Space and time have long been [understood as] aspects that determine beings in their singularity, uniqueness, individuality. They are *principia individuationis*, principles of determination. Through these principles, one can determine beings or realities in their concretion, or at least help to determine them—and the people too, in particular.

If we ask about the people in space, we must fend off two misconceptions from the start. When we hear these two words, we think to begin with of a contemporary slogan: “a people without space.” If by this we mean living space [*Lebensraum*], then without a doubt we have said too much. Perhaps one could say: a people without adequate living space, without sufficient [80] living space for its positive development. We must always know that space necessarily belongs to the people in its concrete Being, that there is no such thing as a “people without space” in the most literal sense. — The second error consists in taking the space of the people or the state, following geography or geopolitics, as a bounded geometrical surface that we can measure precisely in terms of square kilometers—that is, as a measurable, extended area. Even if we just consider this notion from a purely geometrical point of view, it contradicts the sense of the word “space,” which is, after all, three-dimensional and as such is measured not with plane measures, but cubically.

Now, since we at least know what “space” does not mean—this measurable, extended area—we can question further. We do not want to simply count up and arrange what we know about the relations between a people and space, but we want to continue our reflections by comparing the way human beings and a people relate to space and the way dead matter, plants, and animals relate to space.

To begin with, we will ask about matter in space. The science that concerns itself with the relationship of merely material beings to space is physics. In the latest results of its research, concerning atoms, atomic nuclei, and electrons, physics has shown that bodies do not simply stand in space in a purely geometrical way, that space is not an indifferent medium that surrounds the bodies in question, but that these bodies are oriented into space in a very particular way. The position of a body in space is fundamentally non-arbitrary; it stands in a completely definite reciprocal relation to its surroundings. This linkage of things to space and to fields is part of their essence and their kind of Being. Quite new possibilities for scientific method are provided by this atomic or field physics. Today there are already physicists who, in principle, are expressing the idea of solving biological problems with the help of field physics. True, this attempt would be a regression to materialism, but all the same, it indicates a possibility of taking up the question in a fundamentally new way. — By the way, these thoughts are not at all as new as they may seem to us. Aristotle, in his theory of the spheres, already sees cosmic space as something that is not indifferently empty. He assigns every matter to its appropriate place.

Now let us ask how the relation of dead matter to space differs from that of living things. Is it that animals can move around in space, and mountains apparently cannot? (Actually, they do move, and in fact move constantly, but their way of moving is different.) The difference in the manner of moving does not yet change anything in the relationship to space. The decisive difference is that the animal somehow has to deal with space, that it operates in space and is in turn marked by it. For instance, for a fish, dwelling in water is not an arbitrary condition, but a necessity; it is precisely what gives the fish living space and the possibility of life. It is also a fact that [81] crabs that live in pools grow when they are put into a larger body of water. They orient themselves to the space in which they find themselves at the time. Zoology and botany decline to investigate such things; they consider them frivolous. In most cases, these sciences are not

open to such questions and have no feel for them. The questions are alive, in a very broad sense, in ecology, the theory of the locale of individuals. But so far, ecologists have simply determined where plants and animals live; they have not asked in a fundamental way about locale. Biology is more open to this particular problem. It calls the relation between living being and space the "environment." This word is meant to indicate that the limit between space and living being is not the surface of the living body, that the living being does not simply take up a section of indifferent space; the living being rules space over and above the body, it possesses a Being that is oriented beyond the body.

Since human Being, as we have already seen, is essentially different from animal Being, presumably human Being in space is also completely different from that of the animal. For the Being of the people, as a human way of Being, space is not simply surroundings, or an indifferent container. When we investigate the people's Being-in-space, we see that every people has a space that belongs to it. Persons who live by the sea, in the mountains, and on the plains are different. History teaches us that nomads have not only been made nomadic by the desolation of wastelands and steppes, but they have also often left wastelands behind them where they found fruitful and cultivated land—and that human beings who are rooted in the soil have known how to make a home for themselves even in the wilderness. Relatedness to space, that is, the mastering of space and becoming marked by space, belong together with the essence and the kind of Being of a people. So it is not right to see the sole ideal for a people in rootedness in the soil, in attachment, in settledness, which find their cultivation and realization in farming and which give the people a special endurance in its propagation, in its growth, in its health. It is no less necessary to rule over the soil and space, to work outwards into the wider expanse, to interact with the outside world. The concrete way in which a people effectively works in space and forms space necessarily includes both: rootedness in the soil and interaction.

Only on this basis can we start moving in the direction of the state. The people and the state have a space that belongs to them. But it has not been decided whether the space of the people coincides with the space of the state. So the state cannot be an intellectual construct, or a sum of legal principles, or a constitution. It is essentially related to space and formed by space. Its space is, to a certain extent, the space of the people rooted in the

soil, insofar as it is grasped in terms of the will to work out into the expanse, in terms of interaction, in terms of power. This space we call land, sovereign dominion, territory; in a certain sense, it is the fatherland. The homeland is not to be confused with the fatherland. The homeland will in [82] most cases, from a purely external point of view, be a narrower region of the space of the state. But it is never this in principle; it need not have anything to do with the state. There are completely different relations at work in the two. We can speak of the state only when rootedness in the soil is combined with the will to expansion, or generally speaking, interaction. A homeland is something I have on the basis of my birth. There are quite particular relations between me and it in the sense of nature, in the sense of natural forces. Homeland expresses itself in rootedness in the soil and being bound to the earth. But nature works on the human being, roots him in the soil, only when nature belongs as an environment, so to speak, to the people whose member that human being is. The homeland becomes the way of Being of a people only when the homeland becomes expansive, when it interacts with the outside—when it becomes a state. For this reason, peoples or their subgroups who do not step out beyond their connection to the homeland into their authentic way of Being—into the state—are in constant danger of losing their peoplehood and perishing. This is also the great problem of those Germans who live outside the borders of the Reich: they do have a German homeland, but they do not belong to the state of the Germans, the Reich, so they are deprived of their authentic way of Being.—In summary, then, we can say that the space of a people, the soil of a people, reaches as far as members of this people have found a homeland and have become rooted in the soil; and that the space of the state, the territory, finds its borders by interacting, by working out into the wider expanse.

In this connection, at the end of our last session we still made a few brief remarks on the significance of folklore for the life of a people. We heard that people and space mutually belong to each other. From the specific knowledge of a people about the nature of its space, we first experience how nature is revealed in this people. For a Slavic people, the nature of our German space would definitely be revealed differently from the way it is revealed to us; to Semitic nomads, it will perhaps never be revealed at all. This way of being embedded in a people, situated in a people, this original participation in the knowledge of the people, cannot be taught; at most, it

can be awakened from its slumber. One poor means of doing this is folklore. It is a peculiar mishmash of objects that have often been taken from the customs of a particular people. But it often also investigates customs, mores, or magic which no longer have anything to do with a specific people in its historical Being. It investigates forces that are at work everywhere among primitive and magical human beings. So folklore is not suited to ask about what belongs specifically to a people; often it even does the very opposite. This is why it is a misunderstanding and an error to believe that one can awaken the consciousness of the *Volk* with the help of folklore [*Volkskunde*]. We must above all guard ourselves against being overly impressed by the word “folk.”
[83]

SESSION 9[1]

February 23, 1934

Looking back over the previous sessions, we keep this firmly in view: people and state are not two realities that we might observe isolated, as it were, from one another. The state is the preeminent Being of the people; we will leave open the question of whether and how a people is also possible in a condition before it has a state. But at the same time, the people in its Being is not bound to the state insofar as the state appears in this or that form, the people can outlast the state in a certain way—although this point should not be misunderstood. So the Being of the people and the Being of the state are in a certain sense separable.

What is a people? This question about the essence of the people *per se* is one we simply cannot pose, because the people is always already seen from the perspective of a particular Being of a state, and so is always already politically determined. We can never clearly establish the Being of a people in itself because in such an undertaking a particular state-consciousness always already plays a role. The same is the case if we want to get clear about the concept of "the state." For this reason, one cannot establish a theory of the state that is not already built upon particular ties to the Being of a people. Thus political-philosophical questioning about one or the other [i.e. people or state] is always played out within a certain polarity, within the difference between people and state as a being and its Being.

Once again we ask, what is the state? As we have already said earlier, a general characteristic of the state is "order." On the face of it, this is a purely formal category that in itself does not yet have any connection to a definite region of Being. We see order everywhere; I can put stones and the like in order. This abstract concept of order as a purely formal direction for thinking easily leads reflection about the state astray, as is proven by

nineteenth-century theories of the state.— For this reason we ask more pointedly: what is being claimed about this order in the state? How is order meant here? Order in the sense of the order of rule, of superordination and subordination, of leadership and following. And yet, what does order of mastery, order of power, mean?—The will of one gets implemented in the will of others, who thereby become the ruled. But this tells us nothing about how this implementation happens. Nor is anything said about whether and to what extent the will of those ruled coincides with the will of the ruler, which surely is of fundamental importance for the relation of the one to the other and above all for the relation as a whole. And yet already this notion of ruler and ruled suggests the view that necessarily and from the start takes the people as "the mastered" in the real sense of the word, thereby in principle denying to the people a will of its own.

[84] Here we have a mastery that recognizes nothing higher than itself; here mastery becomes sovereignty, where the supreme force is taken as the essence and expression of the state. This condition, in which the state as this supreme power pertains to only one or a few, explains the tendency to assign this sovereignty to the other partner, the people, which then necessarily leads to the other extreme. Only on the basis of the notion of sovereignty as absolutism can we really understand and explain the essence of the French Revolution as an opposing phenomenon.

Therefore we said that mastery is power in the sense of implementation of the will. But this presumes a certain powerfulness and governing force that first guarantee an implementation. Because mastery and sovereignty are modes of Being of the people, the question of the origin and the foundation of power can always be raised only on the basis of a particular way in which the people has its Being in a state, and so the question is always already politically defined. The will of the state implements itself in various definite ways, for example, in administration. Through its various intermediaries, this implementation of the will is admittedly attenuated and no longer fully manifest to us as what it is, especially after we have gotten used to seeing the state as one region among many, one reality among many, and in this way we have lost a direct, living relation to the state.

But what is will?—We distinguish willing from wishing. Both are a certain kind of striving. This tells us nothing yet, though; animals also strive, if only by following a drive. By contrast to wish, will is the striving that engages in action; wish lacks engagement. But will is more than mere

urge. Urge does indeed aim at something, but this "something" is, in contrast to willful striving, not sharply delineated, not clearly seen and recognized. Will aims at an individual thing, urge aims at a whole complex of possibilities. We cannot declare absolutely that will aims at the definite and important, and wish at the indefinite and unimportant. Otherwise we could not say, on the one hand, "He does not know what he wills to do," while on the other hand, one could not wish a sick person "health," which surely is a particular good, and a high one. We will not get into the question of well-wishing. What is characteristic for the distinction [between willing and wishing] and thereby for the essence of willing is therefore engaged striving on the one hand and, on the other, disengaged longing.

Will aims at a goal. But the one who is striving willfully does not recognize and grasp this goal blindly and on its own; rather—and this is essential—it is seen in connection and in combination with the ways and means. So the goal is always already grasped together with the possibility of its actualization. Will grasps the situation, the whole fullness of time; in the will works the *kairos* that demands resoluteness and action. This involves deliberation, in which I run through the field in which particular laws are at play.

[85] Now, what should I call this willful striving? Initiative? —No, initiative does not pertain to every willing, or, to put it better, to everyone who wills. Initiative pertains only to someone who makes a beginning of something. Energy? —Not this either. Energy is a particular heightened and sustained activity of the will. What, then? "Action." An animal cannot act, because it cannot will. This activity determined by the will is what Aristotle named *praxis*, and he distinguished it according to the properties of what the will strives for and according to the modes of its realization in technical-practical and moral-practical activity.

The first mode has to do with the actualization of an object. For example, "It is my will to build a house." What I am willing here is an object that is related to nature. The accomplishment and ordering of this actuality "house" is essentially determined by nature; it happens through technology in the widest sense. What is willed is a being that is based on particular natural relations and laws. The architect must already accommodate himself to certain factors in making his plan, and even more so in making it actual: when he digs the foundation and comes across this or that unanticipated obstacle, and then when in his handling of the building materials he is

entirely dependent on their laws and must also take this or that possibility into consideration.

Things are different with the activity that is directed to the will of an individual or a whole group in order to elicit this or that action or attitude in them. Here we have a community of will. What the one who acts wills is a willing Being among others. Kant calls this activity moral-practical. Moral, because it is related to human beings, who are free according to their essence and therefore moral.

So much for a clarification of the concept of "will." We should never equate the will of an individual with the will of a people. Both display entirely specific structural relations. The will of a people is not free in the sense of the freedom of the individual will, and this fact is of great importance for the implementation of the will. The will of the people is a complicated structure that is hard to grasp. The leader has to deal with this structure, not with free individuals. The will of the people is not the sum of individual wills but rather a whole that has its own, originary characteristics.

The question of the consciousness of the will of the community is a problem in all democracies, a question that can really become fruitful only when the will of the leader and the will of the people are recognized in their essence. Our task today is to direct the fundamental attitude of our communal Being toward this actuality of people and leader in which both as a single actuality are not to be separated. Only when this fundamental schema is achieved by way of essential transformation is a true leader-education possible.

[86]

SESSION 10[1]

Report on the last session of the seminar of Winter Semester 1933–34, on February 23, 1934

Following up on the previous session of the seminar, we again spoke about the fact that a people always outlasts its form of state. But this point is not to be understood to mean that a people can alter its current form of state arbitrarily; the change of a state and the form of a state in general are connected to a people's disposition and will, either to decline or to build itself up.

The character of the state as an order of rule led us to explain the relation between rulers and ruled. First we had to reject the simple equation of the ruled and the oppressed. Ruling involves power, which creates a rank order through the implementation of the ruler's will, inasmuch as he is actually powerful—that is, he shows paths and goals to the ruled. Under this true rule, there are ruled people who are not oppressed.

We then added to the argument over the essence of the will. In contrast to wish, it was said, will characterizes engagement on behalf of a particular goal. It became clear that this definition was insufficient, since there can be engagement in some arbitrary goal, as in the case of adventurers. There is a further form of behavior in which one "knows" the goal without being engaged at all—but true knowledge this cannot be. True knowledge involves both an understanding of the goal and engagement—that is, a leap into the accomplishment of the goal—along with persistence, which makes the engaged person develop.

But now—and with this question, we reached back to where we got started in our question about the will—what is going on when one implements one's own powerful will that is directed at the whole?

Before we actually asked the question, we got to talking about the form of implementation. One can distinguish two forms or ways: first persuasion, and then coercion.

Persuasion can happen (1) through speech, and (2) through action. For the Greeks, speech was a preeminent means to political power. Their political instinct recognized the persuasive force of speech in an exemplary manner; we know this unforgettably from Thucydides. It is an unconscious recognition of the power of speech that in our own day, the speeches of the Führer made an impression that came to be expressed by the term "the drummer."[2]

However, the effective will is most urgently "persuasive" in acts. The great effective actor is at the same time the "powerful" one, the "ruler," whose Dasein and will becomes determinative—through "persuasion," that is, when one knows and recognizes the soaring will of the leader.

[87] But the will can also be implemented by coercion, where commands are a form of carrying out the will. This form is not creative. Still, a command can trigger conviction, as in 1914.

This point led us to ask whether coercion can generate a will, and what the attitude of the "coerced" is in an action that is performed under coercion. It became apparent that mere compliance is inadequate, and this helped us reach a more precise definition of the unwillingness that comes into play here: unwillingness is a particular form of willing (not a not-willing, but itself a kind of willing). This willing-in-unwillingness is the privative relation here, a distinctive negative relation. This was clarified by contrasting the examples of a blind man and the supposed idea of a blind stone: while a blind man lacks something that belongs to being human, seeing does not belong to the stone as stone, so we cannot speak privatively of a blind stone, as if it lacked some part of its particular Being as a stone.

The true implementation of the will is not based on coercion, but on awakening the same will in another, that is, the same goal and engagement or accomplishment. The implementation of the will, in this sense, transforms people in proportion to the greatness of the effective will. This implementation is not a matter of a momentary yes-saying, but a decision of the individual. The crucial factor here cannot be the sum, as precise as it may be, but only the qualitative value of the individual decision, the degree of comprehension and penetration. It is in this sense that we must understand the current demands for "political education": not a

memorization of sentences and opinions and forms, but the creation of a new fundamental attitude of the will.

The will of the leader first transforms the others into a following, and from the following arises a community. Their sacrifice and service comes from this living connection, not from mere obedience and the force of institutions.

A particular and distinctive form of the implementation of the will is education (and school education, as the education of knowledge, is part of this): at bottom it is nothing but the implementation of the will of the leader and the will of the state, that is, of the people. We merely alluded in this connection to other forms of implementation of the will of the state, such as governmental administration and the justice system.

Finally, we emphasized the characteristic form of our current state formation as a coming-to-be of the people, and with this we explained one of the essential concepts of the modern theory and formation of the state: the concept of sovereignty. Johannes Bodinus[3] first recognized and formulated this concept with great precision in his *Republica* (1576), defining it as *summa in cives ac subditos legibusque soluta potestas* [supreme and absolute power over the citizens and over those subject to the laws]. For Bodinus, this power stands [88] only under the higher bond to God. Today one often says "people" where formerly one said God, and defines this ultimate bond accordingly. The higher bond creates the highest freedom, whereas lack of commitment is negative freedom. One has sometimes understood political freedom in this latter sense, and thus misunderstood it—a phenomenon that is supposed to have led to the sovereignty of the people, just as the *omnipotentia Dei* was secularized into the sovereignty of the state.

This train of thought led us to discuss three great disintegrations that have occurred many times since the dissolution of the universal commitments and obligations of the Middle Ages:

1 The collapse of dogmatic-ecclesiastical faith, of the concept of creation, occurred in the wake of the first dissolution of a great bond: man became a self-legislating being that wills to, and must, found his own Being himself. This is the source of Descartes' search for a *fundamentum absolutum*, which he found in the conviction *ego cogito*,

ergo sum. The Being of man is based on reason, that is, mathematical *ratio*, which is elevated to the decisive power of the world.

2. The second disintegration consists in the disintegration of the community—the fact that the individual in himself is the final court of appeal.
3. Descartes carries out the sharp separation between mind and body.

The concept of sovereignty developed in the context of this movement.

Of the three domains that we touched upon in the course of our explanations and questions—nature, history, and state—the state is the narrowest, but it is the most actual actuality that must give all Being new meaning, in a new and original sense. The highest actualization of human Being happens in the state.

The Führer state, as we have it, means the completion of the historical development: the actualization of the people in the leader. The Prussian state, as it was completed with the cultivation of the Prussian nobility, is the precursor of today's state. This relation testifies to the elective affinity between Prussianism and the Führer. From this tradition stems the saying of the great royal elector, spoken in the spirit of Luther—and we too stand in this tradition, if we acknowledge its meaning: *Sic gesturus sum principatum, ut rem populi esse sciam, non meam privatam*.[4] [I will exercise leadership knowing that it is an affair of the people, not my private matter.]

HERITAGE